

"Speakers' Forum" hosts distinguished individuals to address global peace, issues of environmental justice, gun violence, and the politics of crime and punishment that affect quality of life in local communities. The "Art and Writing Challenge" encourages awareness and discussion among Contra Costa County students of the environment, economic inequality and the promotion of non-violence. The first "Creating Peaceful Schools Conference" brought together over a hundred local educators to develop strategies for promoting non-violence in the classroom and encouraging children to focus on ways to promote a more peaceful and just environment. Furthermore, through peaceful public protests against wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and many educational forums developed by Mary Alice and her board of directors, the Center has become a well-known hub for thoughtful discussion of current events in the East Bay Area.

Mr. Speaker, we invite this chamber to join us in honoring Mary Alice O'Connor for her tireless and dedicated service to the people of Contra Costa County. We join her family, colleagues, and friends in congratulating her on a successful and fulfilling career at the Mt. Diablo Peace and Justice Center, and wish her the very best on her future endeavors.

RECOGNIZING THE CHRISTENING OF THE USS "SOMERSET"

HON. MARK S. CRITZ

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 18, 2012

Mr. CRITZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the christening of the USS *Somerset*. On July 28, 2012, the USS *Somerset* will become the latest San Antonio class landing platform/dock, LPD, to join our Navy's fleet. This ship will commemorate the valor and courage of the 40 passengers and crew of United Flight 93 who gave their lives to protect our way of life on September 11, 2001.

In waters across the globe, the USS *Somerset* will continue the fight for freedom that the United Flight 93 passengers and crew began. Wherever the ship travels, her impregnable exterior will symbolize our impregnable resolve to honor their memory and to continue their legacy of sacrifice for the greater good.

About 22 tons of steel taken from a crane near the Flight 93 crash site in Shanksville, PA, has been incorporated into the ship's bow stem. Like the steel from that crane, the American people have taken a new form since 9/11. We are stronger and more resilient than we were prior to that fateful day. Like the steel from that crane, we have emerged from the tragic events of September 11th ready and eager to take on new challenges, embark on new journeys and explore new horizons.

The USS *Somerset* is the last of three ships that have been built in honor of the September 11th victims. The USS *New York*, christened in March 2008, was built as a tribute to the individuals who lost their lives at the World Trade Center and the USS *Arlington*, christened in March 2011, was built as a tribute to the servicemembers and civilians who perished at the Pentagon.

Mr. Speaker, I celebrate the christening of the USS *Somerset* with great pride. It is my most sincere hope that the delivery of this ship

will provide the family members and friends of the passengers and crew of United Flight 93 with some measure of solace. For the USS *Somerset* will carry the story and sacrifice of their loved ones to the Sailors and Marines tasked with defending our freedoms, promoting peace and providing assistance across our oceans.

HONORING KINEU DONALD

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 18, 2012

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Ms. Kineu Donald, Salutatorian of Raymond High School; Class of 2012. Kineu was born to the proud mother of Sheillia Donald, on December 16, 1993, in Edwards, Mississippi.

She attended Bolton-Edwards schools through middle school. While in middle school Kineu was consistent in her efforts to remain on the Honor Roll and Principal's List. She finished Bolton-Edwards Elementary Middle School, and was acknowledged as the Valuedictorian of her eighth grade class.

Throughout high school, Kineu has been recognized for her many achievements in both academics and extra-curricular activities. She was a member of the band, choir, Beta Club, Student Council, and Student Body. In addition to her extra-curricular activities, Kineu also participated in many community service projects sponsored by her school and church.

As a high school graduate, Kineu plans to attend Alcorn State University and major in agricultural economics or nutrition and dietetics, to aid her in her pursuit to become a food science technologist or a dietician.

Mr. Speaker, I ask our colleagues to join me in honoring Ms. Kineu Donald the Salutatorian for Raymond High School Class of 2012.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. AL GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 18, 2012

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I was unavoidably detained and missed the following votes:

1. H.R. 6018—To authorize appropriations for the Department of State for fiscal year 2013, and for other purposes, as amended. Had I been present, I would have voted "yes" on this bill.

2. S. 2009—Insular Areas Act of 2011. Had I been present, I would have voted "yes" on this bill.

RETURN OF THE INTERNATIONAL AIDS CONFERENCE

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 18, 2012

Ms. LEE of California. Mr. Speaker, for the first time in more than two decades, the

United States will host the 19th International AIDS Conference—drawing over 20,000 people from around the world to our Nation's capital.

Having participated in every Conference since I was first elected to Congress in 1998, I knew we could not bring the conference back to the United States until the discriminatory immigration ban on people living with HIV was lifted.

In 2007, I first introduced a bill to repeal the ban. Few believed it could be done, but through bipartisan support we achieved this goal.

This week, the return of the Conference is an important opportunity to shine a global spotlight on the fight against AIDS in African American communities and a national spotlight on the ongoing global epidemic.

Today, I will introduce new legislation to do just that.

Ending the HIV/AIDS Epidemic Act articulates a policy and financing framework to achieve an AIDS-Free Generation in the United States and globally.

I urge all my colleagues to support it so that we can begin to bring an end to AIDS here at home and around the world.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS SECTOR INVESTS IN THE NATIONAL ECONOMY

HON. RANDY HULTGREN

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 18, 2012

Mr. HULTGREN. Mr. Speaker, as the national economy continues to struggle, I would like to highlight an encouraging development with regard to the telecommunications sector. As the attached synopsis of a recent report by the Progressive Policy Institute indicates, investment in the economy is a critical factor in promoting growth, creating jobs, and stimulating productivity. I applaud the telecom industry for its contribution to this effort.

REPORT: TELECOM SECTOR LEADS THE WAY IN DOMESTIC ECONOMIC INVESTMENTS

While the domestic economy continues to struggle, a new report shows that the telecommunications space remains one of the biggest investors in attempting to boost the nation's fortunes.

The Progressive Policy Institute report, "Investment Heroes: Who's Betting on America's Future," found that among non-financial institutions, AT&T and Verizon Communications were the two top investors of capital expenditures in the country last year. AT&T took the top spot with a reported \$20.1 billion in investments in 2011, with Verizon investing \$16.2 billion.

"The exponential growth in consumer demand for cable and wireless data services makes it both a necessity and an incentive for these companies to invest in building out their service capabilities," the report noted. "Investment is what led to development of the latest high-speed 4G networks, estimated to be 50% more efficient in streaming wireless data than its 3G predecessor. What's more, the commitment of these telecom companies to investment in wireless infrastructure, cable communications, and processing equipment is a good example of how investment can have important spillover benefits. By using the infrastructure developed and maintained by telecom companies,